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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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25315	7590	12/22/2004	EXAMINER	
BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM, PLLC 701 FIFTH AVENUE SUITE 4800 SEATTLE, WA 98104			COUSO, YON JUNG	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2625	

DATE MAILED: 12/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

1. Applicant's arguments filed July 6, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

a. The drawing objection has been withdrawn.

b. The objection made to claim 1 has been withdrawn.

c. The applicants argue that the Irion does not teach or suggest determining an average value of pixels surrounding the malfunctioning pixel in an image generated and recorded by the sensor. The examiner disagrees. Irion discloses detection of strays (column 7, line 52), which reads on a pixel corresponding to a photosite. Irion also discloses assigning the average value of the pixels surrounding a pixel corresponding to a photosite determined to be inoperable, and assigning the average value to the pixel that corresponds to the inoperable photosite (column 7, lines 55-59).

2. Claims 17-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 17, lines 9-10 "a photosite determined to be inoperable" is not clear how the inoperable photosites are determined. There is nothing in the claim to indicate how this inoperable photosites are determined.

Claims 18-23 variously depend from an indefinite antecedent claim.

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

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(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-4, 6, 9, 15, 17-20, 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Irion et al (U.S. Patent 6,190,308 B1, newly cited, "Irion").

The arguments presented in paragraph 1 above, as to the applicability of the reference are incorporated herein.

In regards to claim 1, Irion discloses a method comprising: exposing (col 7, line 10, and col 8, line 4) a digital image sensor (ref no 1, Fig 1) comprising an array of photosites (ref no 13, Fig 1, and col 6, line 40) to a test card (e.g. white surface, col 7, line 40); comparing (col 7, line 10) an image signal generated by one or more of the photosites in the array, based on the exposure to the test card, to a threshold value (col 7, line 55); and generating a profile (col 7, line 20 and 30) of the digital image sensor based on the comparison, wherein the profile indicates if a photosite is inoperable (column 7, lines 52); recording an image by the digital image sensor (col 7, lines 21 and 25); and adjusting the recorded image (col 7, lines 22 and 29), according to the stored profile (col 7, line 20 and 30) and a compensation algorithm (col 7, line 56). Irion also teaches adjusting comprising determining an average value of pixels surrounding a pixel corresponding to a photosite determined to be inoperable, and assigning the average value to the pixel that corresponds to the inoperable photosite (column 7, lines 55-59).

In regards to claim 2, Irion further discloses in col 7, line 52, "detection of strays", the generated profile comprising status information of the photosites in the array.

In regards to claim 3, Irion further discloses in col 7, line 30, the method further comprising storing the generated profile in memory associated with the digital image sensor.

In regards to claim 4, Irion further discloses in col 8, line 6, "inserted in succession", the method further comprising repeating the steps of exposing and comparing for one or more additional test cards.

In regards to claim 6, Irion further discloses in col 6, line 42, and col 3, line 16, the digital image sensor is a color device and the test cards are different base colors.

In regards to claim 9, Irion further discloses in col 7, line 55, adjusting the value assigned to a malfunctioning photosite interpolates the value of adjacent photosites.

In regards to claim 15, Irion discloses a computer program product comprising: a first component for recording an image (col 7, line 10, and col 8, line 4) by a digital image sensor (ref no 1, Fig 1) comprising an array of photosites (ref no 13, Fig 1, and col 6, line 40), wherein the digital image sensor includes a profile (col 7, line 20, 23, 30, and 52 "detection of strays") of the operable status of the photosites; a second component (col 7, line 22 and 28) for determining an average value of pixels surrounding a pixel corresponding to a photosite with inoperable status information, and entering the determined

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average value as the value for the pixel that corresponds to the inoperable photosite (column 7, lines 55-59).

In regards to claim 17, Irion discloses a system comprising: one or more test cards (col 3, lines 15-17); a digital image sensor (ref no 1, Fig 1) comprising an array of photosites (ref no 13, Fig 1, and col 6, line 40); and an image processor (ref no 19, Fig 1) for comparing (col 7, line 10) an image signal generated by one or more of the photosites in the array of the digital image sensor, based on exposure of the sensor to one of the one or more test cards (col 7, line 40, "white surface"), to a threshold value (col 7, line 54), and for generating a profile (col 7, line 20 and 30) of the digital image sensor based on the comparison.). Irion also teaches adjusting comprising determining an average value of pixels surrounding a pixel corresponding to a photosite determined to be inoperable, and assigning the average value to the pixel that corresponds to the inoperable photosite (column 7, lines 55-59).

In regards to claim 18 and 19, all the additional elements set forth in this claim have been addressed in the argument of claims 2 and 3.

In regards to claim 20, Irion further discloses in col 8, lines 3-16, the image processor generating a profile by comparing an image signal generated by all the photosites when exposed to all the test cards.

In regards to claims 22, all the additional elements set forth in this claim have been addressed in the argument of claim 6.

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 5 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Irion et al (U.S. Patent 6,190,308 B1, cited above, "Irion") as applied to claim 4 above, in combination with Selby et al (U.S. Patent 6,038,038, newly cited, "Selby").

In regards to claim 5, Irion does not expressly disclose the digital image sensor being a monochrome device.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize a monochrome device in lieu of Irion's video camera 13 because it would save on costs while reducing the number of necessary calibrations.

Irion may not expressly disclose the test cards being a shade value. However, Irion discloses one test card being a shade value (col 7, line 40, "white surface", also col 3, line 16).

Selby teaches in col 7, lines 19-40, "dark-grey target" and "light-grey target", using test cards that are a shade value.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate Selby's test cards into Irion's method because Selby's test cards accurately determine the dark offset level of image sensing elements to enable correction thereof in an image pick-up device (Selby, col 8, line 54).

In regards to claim 21, all the additional elements set forth in this claim have been addressed in the argument of claim 5.

5. Claim 7 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Irion et al (U.S. Patent 6,190,308 B1, cited above, "Irion") as applied to claim 6 above, in combination with Lin et al (U.S. Patent 6,069,973, newly cited, "Lin").

In regards to claim 7, Irion does not expressly disclose the test cards comprising a red test card, a green test card, and a blue test card. However, Irion teaches using "homogeneous color charts, preferably with pure prime colors".

While it is well known in the art that the pure prime colors are red, green, and blue, Lin teaches using red, green, and blue targets in the correction of an imaging array (col 5, line 15 and Fig 5).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize Lin's red, green, and blue targets as Irion's homogeneous color charts because the use of these colors correct for non-uniformity in the color filter coating thickness on each sensor (Lin, col 5, line 10).

In regards to claim 23, all the additional elements set forth in this claim have been addressed in the argument of claim 7.

6. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory

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action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Chasen is also cited.

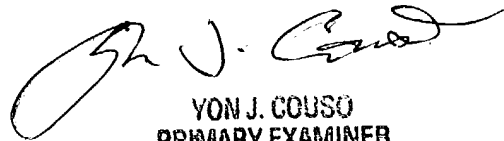
8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Yon Couso whose telephone number is (703) 305-4779. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bhavesh Mehta, can be reached on (703) 308-5246. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR

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system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



YON J. COUSO
PRIMARY EXAMINER

YJC

December 14, 2004